

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 487

By Gresham

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Colonel Will Rhea Winfrey, Sr., of Somerville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Colonel Will Rhea Winfrey, Sr., Retired; and

WHEREAS, Will Rhea Winfrey was an exemplary public servant and consummate military professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life and to protect the freedom and liberties of his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Col. Winfrey was born September 1, 1916, at the family homestead in Fayette County and was the fourth and youngest son of seven children of Arthur Peter Winfrey and Harriet Rhea Winfrey. Col. Winfrey and his siblings were the fourth generation to live and work on the family home place of "Chestnut Hill," located six miles north of Somerville; and

WHEREAS, Col. Winfrey attended Glade Springs School and Somerville Elementary and graduated from Fayette County High School in 1935; and

WHEREAS, Col. Winfrey accepted a football scholarship to Southwestern College (now Rhodes College) in Memphis, where he excelled in sports and was an outstanding member of the Southwestern football team; and

WHEREAS, his athletic prowess garnered him Most Valuable Athlete accolades for his accomplishments, which included breaking Tennessee records for the discus and shot put throws. Upon his induction into the Rhodes College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006, a plaque was hung in that hallowed place which states "No one in the State of Tennessee was better than Will Rhea Winfrey in the shot put"; and

WHEREAS, in July of 1941, his country requested his services and he dutifully responded by enlisting in the United States Army. Will Winfrey ultimately attained the rank of Colonel and spent twenty years in military service to his country, serving both at home and on foreign soil; and

WHEREAS, on September 11, 1945, Col. Winfrey married Marguerite Mason and of their union was born one son, Will Rhea Winfrey, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, upon his retirement from the military in 1961, Col. Winfrey moved his family to Fayette County, where they took residence at their newly built abode, "The Woods," which is located adjacent to his beloved Chestnut Hill home place; and

WHEREAS, though hampered by visual impairment, the Colonel, as he was affectionately known, stayed active and involved with his family, community, church, and county politics throughout his latter years; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his parents, siblings, and spouse, Col. Winfrey is survived by his son and by a great host of extended family members in both Fayette and Haywood Counties; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Will Rhea Winfrey, Sr., leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of purpose and commitment of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Colonel Will Rhea Winfrey, Sr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Colonel Winfrey.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.